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THE NEW Y

by Henry Peet

New YMCA Capital Campaign Chairperson

AMBISIOUS PROJECT!

The Grand Traverse Bay Young Men's Christian Association (the Y) has taken on the bold challenge of building a new YMCA for the people of this region through a capital campaign. A campaign steering committee has been working over the past couple of years to raise the necessary funds to build this new 100,000 sq. ft. facility. We are about half way to our goal of raising the money needed. We thank the 380 families, businesses, and organizations who have already pledged and donated.

We would like to raise at least \$4,000,000 by the end of this year. That will put us near our goal and enable us to begin the bidding process.

PLEDGES ARE ACCEPTED!

Some potential major donors have implied that the uncertain economic times make it more difficult to commit their money. A solution to this dilemma may be multi-year pledges. For large pledges, we can allow payments up to 5 years. We have a consortium of banks who have agreed to finance our pledge debt. By spreading payments out, it should help to balance out the up and downs of the market.

THE QUESTION IS WHY THE NEW Y? THE ANSWER IS THE NEW Y!

There are many reasons that the five county Grand Traverse Bay region needs a full service, family oriented facility. The answer to all of them is building the new Y!

One area that will be addressed by the new Y is swimming. Our study showed us that 40% of seventh graders, in this area, can't swim 25 yards. When I moved here, from Ann Arbor, I was shocked to see that none of the schools had swimming pools. The new Y aquatics facility will enable us to teach 2,000 kids per year to swim. The YMCA has the largest "Learn to Swim" program in the nation. We recently brought Olympic swimming champion Janet Evans here to address the need for a new swimming facility.

The new Y will be able to sustain itself by supporting 4,000 members. It will be a full service recreational facility where whole families can come and enjoy themselves.

There is a huge demand for tennis courts in the region. Additional capacity is needed. The new Y will have 6 indoor courts as well as outdoor tennis and pickle ball courts.

For families with very young children, we will have a child-watch area. This will enable families to use the Y without needing to arrange for baby sitters. The child watch area will be a safe place for the kids so the parents can enjoy their time at the Y.

We feel that the location, at 3700 Silver Lake Rd., is at the center of the population area for the 5 county area serviced by the new Y. There are plans to extend the TART Trail to the new location. The location allows for easy in and out access with plenty of parking.

Childhood obesity is becoming a very large problem. Twenty years ago, 1 in 20 kids were considered overweight. Today, 1 in 3 are overweight and 1 in 5 are obese. The new Y will be a great place for kids to get up and move. By the way kids are taught at the Y, they will learn good sportsmanship as well. Each week, 105 kids are enrolled in the summer camp program.

The YMCA is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization where donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We have a "No One Denied" annual campaign to raise money for our scholarship program. Last year over 300 volunteers provided over \$500,000 in salary equivalent hours to help implement the Y's mission.

Please contact the Y to see how you might, through your giving or volunteering, be able to help make the new Y a reality. Call the Y at 933-9622 or go to our website at www.gtbayymca.org to answer any of your questions about the new Y. On-line donations are accepted through your Community Foundation at www.4good4ever.org.